(e)   providing an award for each award-yielding symbol combination appearing in said second set on any of the paylines even if said award yielding symbol combination in the second set appeared in the first set.

Please amend Claim 17 as follows:

17.   (Four Times Amended) A method for operating a gaming device including a plurality of symbols, said method comprising the steps of:

(a)   maintaining in a controller of said gaming device a list of award yielding symbol combinations of said plurality of symbols;

(b)   generating a first set of said symbols, wherein one of said symbols in said first set is a first wild symbol;

(c)   providing an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said first set including any award yielding symbol combinations that include the first wild symbol, the first wild symbol functioning as one of the other symbols to maximize the award yielding combinations;

(d)   selecting at least one but not all of the symbols in the first set except for the first wild symbol in the set for individual replacement and individually replacing each said selected symbol with a second wild symbol to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set of symbols; and

(e)   providing an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said second set including any award yielding symbol combinations that include the first and second wild symbols, wherein the second wild symbol replaces another symbol and each of the first and second wild symbols function as one of the symbols to maximize the award yielding symbol combinations.

Please amend Claim 19 as follows:

19.   (Twice Amended) The method of Claim 17, wherein the gaming device is a slot machine including a plurality of reels having said symbols thereon, and the step of individually replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one selected symbol on the reel which includes said generated wild symbol.

[Please amend Claim 20 as follows:]

20.   (Twice Amended) The method of Claim 17, wherein the gaming device is a slot machine including a plurality of reels having said symbols thereon, and the step of individually replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one symbol of one row of symbols on the reels, wherein said row includes said generated wild symbol.

[Please amend Claim 21 as follows:]

21.   (Twice Amended) The method of Claim 17, wherein the gaming device is a slot machine including a plurality of reels having said symbols thereon, and the step of individually replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one symbol on one of the reels and at least one symbol on one of the rows of symbols on the reels, wherein said reel and said row include said generated wild symbol.

[Please amend Claim 22 as follows:]

22.   (Twice Amended) The method of Claim 17, wherein the gaming device is a slot machine including a plurality of reels having said symbols thereon, and the step of individually replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one other predetermined generated symbol.

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[Please amend Claim 23 as follows:]

23.   (Twice Amended) A method for operating a gaming device including a plurality of playing cards, said method comprising the steps of:

(a)   maintaining in a controller of said gaming device a list of award yielding playing card combinations;

(b)   generating a first set of playing cards, wherein one of said playing cards in said set is a wild card;

(c)   providing an award for each award yielding playing card combination appearing in said first set including said generated wildcard which functions as one of the cards to maximize the award yielding combinations is said first set;

(d)   selecting at least one but not all of the cards in the first set except for said wildcard for individual replacement and individually replacing each said selected playing card with another wildcard to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set; and

(e)   providing an award for each award yielding playing card combination in said second set including the wildcards which function as one of the playing cards to maximize the award yielding combinations.
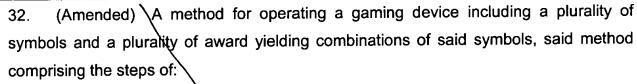
Please amend Claim 31 as follows:

31.   (Four Times Amended) A method for determining an award in a slot machine including a plurality of symbols and a plurality of award yielding combinations of said symbols, said method comprising the steps of:

(a)   randomly generating on a plurality of paylines a first set of said symbols;

(b)   providing a player an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said first set on any of said paylines;

(c)   selecting at least one but not all of the symbols in said first set for individual replacement and individually replacing each said selected symbol with one of the symbols to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set of symbols; and

(d)   providing an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said second set on any of said paylines including all award yielding symbol combinations in the second set even if an award was provided for such award yielding combinations in the first set.

Please amend Claim 32 as follows:

32.   (Amended) A method for operating a gaming device including a plurality of symbols and a plurality of award yielding combinations of said symbols, said method comprising the steps of:

(a)   generating a first set of said symbols, wherein one of said symbols in said set is a first wild symbol;

(b)   providing an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said first set, wherein said wild symbol functions as one of the symbols to maximize the award yielding symbol combinations in said first set;

(c)   individually substituting a second wild symbol for at least one but not all of the symbols in said first set except for said first wild symbol to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set of symbols; and

(d)   providing an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said second set, including each award yielding combination including said wild symbols and wherein each wild symbol functions as one of said symbols to maximize the award yielding symbol combinations in said second set.

Please amend Claim 34 as follows:

34.   (Three Times Amended) A slot machine comprising:

a plurality of reels and a plurality of paylines with the reels;

a plurality of symbols on said reels, said symbols including a wild symbol;

a plurality of symbol combinations that each yield an award if generated by said reels; and

a processor which controls said reels, wherein said processor: (i) causes the reels to generate a first set of said symbols along the paylines; (ii) provides an award for each award yielding symbol combination in said first set on any of the paylines, said wild symbol functioning as at least one other non-wild symbol; (iii) substitutes another one of the non-wild symbols in said first set with another wild symbol to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set of symbols; and (iv) provides an award for each award yielding symbol combination in said second set on any of the paylines, regardless of whether the combination includes a wild symbol, wherein each wild symbol functions as at least one other non-wild symbol.

[Please amend Claim 35 as follows:]

35.   (Twice Amended) A gaming device comprising:

a processor;

a memory device which maintains a plurality of symbols and a plurality of award yielding symbol combinations, wherein the processor communicates with the memory device to:

generate a first set of symbols, wherein one of said symbols is a first wild symbol;

provide an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said first set, wherein said first wild symbol functions as one of the symbols;

individually substitute a second wild symbol for at least one but not all other non-wild symbols in said first set to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set of symbols; and

provide an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said second set, wherein each wild symbol including the first and second wild symbols function as one of the symbols.